

HOMAGE

This year, the Canadian Association of Spanish Language Scholars and Creators will be dedicating its annual Homage and Exhibition to my work as a writer, educator and activist! I feel extremely honoured by this recognition, particularly as it comes from colleagues that I respect and admire. At the same time, it reminds me once again that we artists do not work and live in a vacuum; in fact, we are embedded in and are nourished by our communities.

The homage consisted of a virtual and physical exhibition of works by writers and artists who wish to create a piece in response to my work. These pieces can be poems, stories, paintings, photographs, sculptures, or any other kind of artistic creation. The physical exhibition consisted of oversized printed versions of the contributions, which were displayed during the Association's annual conference at the University of British Columbia, June 5-7, 2019. The works will also be displayed virtually on the "Creative Registry" of the Association's web page, starting on June 5.

My Acceptance Statement (in Spanish and English):

Este homenaje

Yo me crié entre las historias de mi padre y las declamaciones de mi madre. A mi padre le encantaba entretenernos con los dramáticos cuentos de su niñez como hijo de minero y lavandera en el norte de Chile; y a mi madre, con sus mesuradas interpretaciones de la poesía de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Alfonsina Storni, Gabriela Mistral y Juana de Ibarburú.

Así fue que mi padre y mi madre me enseñaron que las palabras tienen músculo, espina dorsal, olor, color, ritmo y movimiento; que crean mundos completos, poblados de personajes ordinarios o insólitos, pero cada uno con sus propios sentimientos y pareceres; que las palabras abren puertas y ventanas; transportan, transponen, traspasan y trasgreden.

Años más tarde, como alfabetizadora y educadora popular, descubrí que las palabras también son repositorios y reproductores de poder; que los opresores las han usado por siglos como instrumentos de dominación, y para explicar y justificar sus acciones. Pero también descubrí que los oprimidos han enarbolado las palabras como herramientas de liberación:

para nombrar y analizar el mundo en que vivimos, intercambiar historias y pensamientos, y articular las acciones que nos llevarán a la construcción de una sociedad más justa para todos.

Este homenaje me colma de placer y sentido del deber. Placer, porque es un reconocimiento a mi trabajo como escritora, educadora y activista, el cual ha estado siempre del lado de los oprimidos; por tanto, es también un homenaje a ellos y sus aliados. Sentido del deber, porque me recuerda una vez más que cuando un artista decide lanzar su trabajo al mundo, ha

asumido un compromiso no solo consigo mismo, sino también con las comunidades que lo nutren y apoyan.

Como humanos, estamos pasando por una coyuntura decisiva: mientras el capitalismo impío y el fascismo avanzan, la resistencia continúa tanto por la justicia social como por la sobrevivencia del planeta. En este contexto, el honor que me confiere el Registro Creativo me anima para seguir actuando y trabajando con integridad.

¡Gracias!

*Carmen
Rodríguez*

This Homage

While growing up, I was immersed in my father's stories and my mother's recitations. My father loved to entertain us with dramatic accounts of his childhood as the son of a miner and a washer woman in the north of Chile; and my mother, with her measured renditions of the poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Alfonsina Storni, Gabriela Mistral and Juana de Ibarburú.

That's how my father and mother taught me that words have muscles and a back bone; scents and colours; rhythm and movement; that they can create complete worlds populated with ordinary or one-of-a-kind characters, but each with their own feelings and world views; that words

can open windows and doors; that they can transport, transpose, trespass and transgress.

Years later, as a literacy worker and popular educator, I discovered that words are also depositories and reproducers of power; that the oppressors have used them for centuries as instruments of domination and to explain and justify their actions. But I also discovered that the oppressed have hoisted words as tools of liberation: to name and analyze the world we live in, exchange stories and ideas, and articulate the actions that will lead us to the construction of a more just society for all.

This homage fills me with both pleasure and a sense of duty. Pleasure because it honours my work as a writer, educator and activist, which has always been on the side of the oppressed; therefore, it is also an homage to them and their allies. A sense of duty because it reminds me once again that when an artist decides to launch her work into the world, she has made a commitment not only with herself, but also with the communities that nourish and support her.

As humans, we find ourselves at a critical juncture: while capitalism and fascism keep pushing their immoral agendas ahead, we cannot but persist in resisting and advocating for social justice and the survival of the planet. In this context, this homage encourages me to continue acting and working with integrity.

¡Gracias!

*Carmen
Rodríguez*